



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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TRIP LIMIT FOR SHALLOW-WATER GROUPER REDUCED TO 5,500 POUNDS

Regulations at 50 CFR 622.44(g)(1)(ii) require NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to reduce the commercial trip limit for Gulf deep-water and shallow-water grouper, combined, to 5,500 pounds if on or before October 1 more than 75 percent of either the shallow-water grouper quota or red grouper quota is reached or is projected to be reached. The deep-water grouper fishery was closed on June 23, 2005, when the quota for that fishery was reached. Therefore, this action will only affect the shallow-water grouper fishery until the end of the 2005-fishing year.

Based on current statistics, NMFS has determined 75 percent of the available commercial quota for red grouper (5.31 million pounds) will be reached on or before August 3, 2005. Accordingly, NMFS is reducing the trip limit for shallow-water grouper (black grouper, gag, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, scamp, yellowmouth grouper, rock hind, and red hind) to 5,500 pounds per trip in the Gulf of Mexico exclusive economic zone effective 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 4, 2005. If the shallow-water grouper fishery is subsequently closed, no fish subject to the closure may be retained.

Further, notice is hereby given by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, pursuant to Chapter 68B-14.0045(3)(b)3, Florida

Administrative Code, that the trip limit for commercial vessels fishing for grouper in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico has been reduced to 5,500 pounds of fish per vessel per trip effective August 4, 2005, at 12:01 a.m., local time. The trip limit reduction in state waters is concurrent with the trip limit reduction in federal waters shallow-water grouper.

NMFS is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NMFS provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to customers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing stewardship to our nation's coastal and marine resources. This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

NMFS is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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